

# South Dakota National Guard

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May 14, 2015

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Rapid City Soldiers honored during deployment ceremony**

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Family and friends of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 48, Operational Support Airlift Command, gathered for an activation ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, May 13.

Five members of the Rapid City-based unit will deploy to Afghanistan in support of Task Force ODIN for up to one year.

"Whether it's a tragedy or disaster here at home or the nation's call to defend us here or abroad, the South Dakota National Guard is ready to respond. Today is a perfect example of that," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "Thank you for your willingness to serve our state and nation. I look forward to the day when you're back safe and sound."

Detachment 48 is a fixed-wing aviation unit comprised of pilots and operations specialists which operate the C-12 King Air. The unit's primary mission in theater is to provide aerial reconnaissance and surveillance in support of U.S. and coalition ground commanders in the field.

"Our primary focus is we support the ground troops, whether that is finding IED's (improvised explosive device) or doing route clearance finding insurgents, we provide battlefield intelligence to the commander on the ground," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Wayne Walker, Det. 48 commander.

"This deployment will be quite a bit different, we will be supporting ground commanders instead of conducting VIP missions," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Williams, C-12 pilot and Afghanistan veteran. "I am looking forward to getting more flight experience as a pilot and to develop professionally."

This will be the third mobilization for the unit, which deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2008 and 2011.

"The fact that this unit has been called up on back-to-back deployments is a clear testament to its significant battle in the warfight," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. "I couldn't be more proud of this unit. I know that you have worked and trained hard. Every one of you are ready to go and do this mission, and it's an important mission, extremely important."

"We are starting to get used to this, there are five of us going on this deployment and we have thirteen previous deployments between us," said Walker.

"We know where we are going and what to expect," said Sgt. 1st Class Randall McCann, aerial sensor operator who has deployed twice. "There are not a lot of changes so my anxiety level is not as high."

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Although the Soldiers will be away from their loved ones, they consider their unit a family.

“We are a very small unit with five members so we are all pretty close,” said McCann. “It makes it easier to go with people you know and are close to. I consider them my second family.”

The Soldiers are not the only ones deploying. Their family also deploys by stepping up on the home front.

“To all the spouses and family members please know that your contributions do not go unnoticed,” said Reisch. “It’s often said that family members who remain behind take on burdens often as great as the Soldier or Airmen that deploys, because you alone handle all the emergencies that happen during the next year.”

Reisch made it clear the Guard is here to help them in their time of need.

“Please know that we are here to help you,” said Reisch. “We have plenty of Soldiers and Airmen that at a drop of a hat, if you need some help, we will be here for you.”

“I’m going to miss my family the most, we have a close-knit family,” said Williams. “I will miss just being home and doing things together. It will be good, but also a challenge. It will help with communication because we will have to learn to express ourselves through FaceTime or Skype.”

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High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



**150513-Z-CW157-151:** Unit members of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s Detachment 48 stand for roll call, Sgt. Derek Lebeau, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Williams, Chief Warrant Officer 3 William Preston, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Wayne Walker and Sgt. 1st Class Randall McCann during the unit’s activation ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Rapid City, S.D., May 13, 2015. The aviation unit will deploy to Afghanistan for up to one year in support of Task Force ODIN. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



**150513-Z-CW157-160:** Governor Dennis Daugaard expresses his appreciation to Chief Warrant Officer 2 William Preston, a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s Detachment 48, for his dedication to serve his country during the unit’s activation ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Rapid City, S.D., May 13, 2015. The aviation unit will deploy to Afghanistan for up to one year in support of Task Force ODIN. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



**150513-Z-CW157-173:** U.S. Army Sgt. Derek Lebeau, a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s Detachment 48, gives his seventeen-month-old daughter Norah a kiss goodbye during the unit’s activation ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Rapid City, S.D., May 13, 2015. The aviation unit will deploy to Afghanistan for up to one year in support of Task Force ODIN. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



**150513-Z-CW157-192:** U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Williams, a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 48, gives his fiancée of two weeks Blair Miller a kiss goodbye during the unit's activation ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Rapid City, S.D., May 13, 2015. The aviation unit will deploy to Afghanistan for up to one year in support of Task Force ODIN. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



**150513-Z-YQ619-054:** U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Wayne Walker, Detachment 48 Commander, addresses the audience during the unit's activation ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Rapid City, S.D., May 13, 2015. The aviation unit will deploy to Afghanistan for up to one year in support of Task Force ODIN. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Kayla Morris/Released)



**150513-Z-CW157-077:** U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, left, the adjutant general of the South Dakota Army National Guard, presents Chief Warrant Officer 4 Wayne Walker, Detachment 48 commander, with a South Dakota state flag to display at their location in Afghanistan during the unit's activation ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility, Rapid City, S.D., May 13, 2015. The aviation unit will deploy to Afghanistan for up to one year in support of Task Force ODIN. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)

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